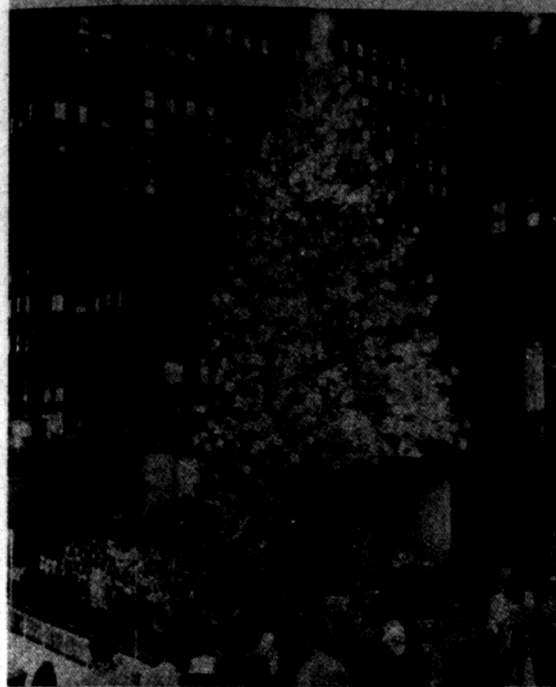


Everywhere, Everywhere, Christmas

NASHVILLE
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Christmas In The City

(RNS Photo)



Christmas In The Country

(RNS Photo)



Christmas In The Church

(RNS Photo)



Christmas In The Home

(RNS Photo)

FMB Appoints 11; 1973 Total Is 227

Richmond (BP) — Eleven new missionaries were appointed in a service in Newport News, Va., and initial steps leading toward the opening of additional mission work in Africa were authorized at the December meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here.

The 11 missionaries, appointed before a crowd of nearly 1,400 people at Parkview Baptist Church in Newport News, brings the total number of missionaries appointed during 1973 to 227, 156 more than last year's total of 171. The 1973 total is the third largest in the 128-year history of the Foreign Mission Board and the largest number of annual appointments since 1969.

Baker J. Cauthen, the board's executive secretary, said, "We undertake this escalation in missionary appointments with the confidence that Southern Baptists remain committed to advance, and that they will provide the required resources through the Cooperative Program (unified budget) and the Little Moon Christmas Offering.

Cauthen added, "The outlook for the Little Moon Christmas Offering is exceedingly encouraging. We await the ingathering of the offering with much anticipation and hope that it will exceed the goal of \$20,000,000."

Mississippians To Serve In Overseas Posts

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — The Rev. and Mrs. Jerry A. Hubbard and Miss Ann Thomson, all with Mississippi connections, were among 11 missionaries appointed Dec. 11 at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board at Parkview Baptist Church here. The Hubbards expect to be assigned to Zambia where he will do general evangelism work.

They are currently living in Sou Lake, Tex., where he is pastor of Pine Ridge Baptist Church.

Hubbard was born in Caruthersville, Mo., and lived in Mississippi. He was graduated from Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., with the bachelor of arts degree in religion and history and from Northwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., with the master of divinity degree.

He has also been pastor of New Home Baptist Church, Nashville, Ark. Chapel Hill Baptist Church, DeQueen, (Continued On Page 2)

Cooper Advocates 6-Day Business Week

NASHVILLE (BP) — Owen Cooper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and a retired industrialist, said here that he favors a voluntary six-day business week as an energy-conserving measure.

"The number of businesses open on the Lord's Day, such as energy-consuming shopping centers in full operation and large quantities of gasoline still consumed in pursuit of the secular, not only strikes a blow at the American home but also gives a

(Continued On Page 3)

The Malagasy Republic, an island off the east coast of Africa, was visited recently by Davis Saunders, area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, and John E. Mills, the board's field representative for West Africa, to examine the possibility of beginning a mission program there.

"Although our travel plans had to be altered and we had only a limited number of contacts in the country, subsequent events indicated that God had prepared the way for us to gain the information we needed," Saunders said.

The population of the country is about seven and a half million. Saunders met with leaders from most of the Protestant denominations on the island. These leaders indicated that Southern Baptist missionaries would be welcome, according to Saunders.

In other action, the board appropriated \$10,000 in relief funds to help in the reconstruction of Baptist church buildings damaged by the earthquake in Mexico and urged Southern Baptists to observe Sunday, Dec. 23, (Continued On Page 2)

The Baptist Record

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Projections Show

SBC Growth Continues During '73

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention statistical projections indicate the denomination continued to grow in 1973, with over one billion dollars in total receipts, the third highest number of baptisms ever recorded and an increase of nearly 207,000 church members.

The preliminary statistics, compiled by reports received from 25,135 Southern Baptist churches, project increases in church membership, Sunday School enrollment, church music enrollment, mission expenditures, Brotherhood enrollment and total financial receipts.

Decreases are predicted in baptisms, Training Union enrollment and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) enrollment.

These projects should be "very close" to the final official figures which will be released in February, 1974, according to Martin B. Bradley, manager of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's research services department. Approximately 8,500 churches have not yet reported.

For several years, church membership has been increasing at approximately two percent each year and

1973 apparently will be no different. The membership is expected to reach the 12,274,000 mark, reflecting a gain of 206,716 or 1.7 per cent.

Although projected baptisms decreased 6.1 percent to a total of 418,500, that figure is the third highest in Southern Baptist history. The number of baptisms in 1973 ranks behind the 445,725 baptisms in 1972 and the 1959 figure of 429,063.

For the first time, the 1972 total receipts surpassed the one billion dollar figure. The 1973 projections indicate a 12.3 per cent increase amounting to \$1,203,000,000 in total receipts.

Mission expenditures showed a 10.2 percent increase for a total of \$192,650,000.

The first gain in Sunday School enrollment since 1964 was recorded in 1972. The 1973 estimate indicates a

modest increase of 349 members, setting the total Sunday School enrollment at 7,178,000.

"While the gain this year was not pronounced," said A. V. Washburn, secretary of the Sunday School Board's Sunday School department, "it indicates last year's gains were not temporary and that there is developing a consistency in Sunday School growth throughout the convention."

"The growth is somewhat spotty as yet, but an increasing number of churches are showing growth in enrollment and an even greater increase in attendance. The future is full of promise."

Church music continued to increase with a reported seven per cent climb in enrollment. The new enrollment for music organizations is 1,254,000 members. (Continued on page 5)

Christmas Everywhere

Christmas in lands of the fir-tree and pine,
Christmas in lands of the palm-tree and vine,
Christmas where snow-peaks stand solemn and white,
Christmas where cornfields lie sunny and bright,
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

Christmas where children are hopeful and gay,
Christmas where old men are patient and gray,
Christmas where peace, like a dove in its flight,
Broods o'er brave men in the thick of the fight,
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!

For the Christ-child who comes is the Master of all,
No palace too great and no cottage too small;
The angels who welcome Him sing from the height,
"In the City of David, a King in His might."
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

Then let every heart keep its Christmas within,
Christ's pity for sorrow, Christ's hatred for sin,
Christ's care for the weakest, Christ's courage for right,
Christ's dread of the darkness, Christ's love of the light,
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

So the stars of the midnight which compass us around
Shall see a strange glory, and hear a sweet sound,
And cry, "Look! the earth is aflame with delight,
O sons of the morning, rejoice at the sight."
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

—Phillips Brooks

Americans United

Ford Asked To Rethink 'Church-State'

WASHINGTON, D. C. (C-SNS) — Americans United for Separation of Church and State today congratulated Vice President Gerald Ford and wished him a successful tenure of public service to the people of the United States.

The religious liberty organization, however, expressed concern about the Vice President's support for parochial school aid and the prayer amendment.

In a letter to the Vice President, Americans United executive director Glenn L. Archer urged Mr. Ford "to affirm his support" for the Supreme Court's June 25, 1973 decision striking down four methods of public aid to parochial schools and to "rethink" his position on the prayer amendment.

Day Of Prayer Urged For Middle East Peace

RICHMOND (BP)—Southern Baptists are being urged to observe Sunday, Dec. 23, as a special Day of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's committee for Europe and the Middle East recommended the day of prayer during the December board meeting here.

"The Day of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East, Dec. 23, comes five days after the peace conference is scheduled to begin in Geneva," said J. D. Hughey, the board's area secretary for Europe and the Middle East. "We may be closer to peace in the Middle East than anytime in the past 25 years, but divine help is needed. It will be appropriate to pray for peace in the Middle East during the same week that we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."

The complete text of the letter follows:

"Please accept our warm congratulations on your elevation to the nation's second highest executive office, the Vice Presidency of the United States.

"We sincerely trust that you will provide for the nation a distinguished example of effective and dedicated public service.

"We urge you to begin this service by affirming support of the June 25, 1973 Supreme Court decision which upheld public aid only for public schools and preserved church schools from government control.

"We Americans have always believed in public support for public institutions.

"While we respect and admire the contributions made by private and church-related schools, we believe their integrity. We have, therefore, been disturbed by your public statements of support for aid which the Supreme Court has clearly declared unconstitutional.

"We urge you, also, to rethink your position on the prayer amendment. The Supreme Court has never banned voluntary prayer from the nation's public schools, but, quite rightly, declared that government-mandated compulsory religious exercises are not permissible.

(Continued on page 5)

BWA Cites Need For Worldwide Relief Work

WASHINGTON (BP) — Crippling results of famine, floods, drought and after-effects of war have prompted an appeal from the Baptist World Alliance here that Americans "not let preoccupation with Watergate, the energy crisis or the Middle East ease from their consciousness or their consciences the many suffering people of the world."

Carl W. Tiller, the BWA's relief coordinator, said here the world-wide Baptist body needs assistance in providing aid to people in need in Africa, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, India and Mexico.

Thirty-five million people continue to need food and water to offset famine in the Sahelian nations of Africa, just south of the Sahara Desert, which is gradually moving south because of drought, he said.

The United Nations, Tiller continued, has estimated that two or three million people in the six countries

(Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta) have already died and that as much as 90 per cent of the livestock has been destroyed.

"The Baptist World Alliance is a channel through which Baptists of America may send gifts to help provide food, dig wells and combat disease in that area," Tiller said. "The BWA uses Baptist personnel and other channels to administer the relief, which is made without regard to religion and solely on the basis of need."

Tiller also cited needs in Ethiopia, where he said "between 100,000 and 150,000 have perished in droughts and another two million are threatened, according to reports." He added that "disease is making matters worse."

Baptists of New Zealand were the first to volunteer aid through the BWA for Ethiopia, Tiller said. Baptists of Australia are taking part in a national effort to raise money for Ethiopian relief.

"Two Baptist bodies of North America (the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist General

Conference) have missionaries in Ethiopia, and they can see to a wise (Continued on page 2)

The Members and Employees of
THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
CONVENTION BOARD

Extend to All of Our Readers

Best Wishes for a
Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

Darkness To Light

A Christian Historian Looks At Christmas

By James Lee Young
For Baptist Press

"Crispus the Christian stood on a balcony and shuddered at the sights and sounds of wild revelry echoing through the streets and courtyards of Rome.

"The Festival of Saturnalia (Dec. 17-24) was in its final day of merry-making. It was 300 years since the star had led the Magi to where the Christ Child was in Judea.

"Activities not openly permitted even in Rome were openly engaged in during this season. Crispus found the reckless celebration so revolting that he tried to stay at home until the week of orgy had ended.

"The following day — Dec. 25 — was Brumalia, the birthday of the sun, when the festivities and rioting reached a peak."

Crispus is fictional, representative of Christians in Rome about 300 A.D., but the man telling the story is real.

William A. Carleton, dean and professor of church history, emeritus, of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., leaned back in his chair and peered from behind a stack of books on the history of Christmas.

His eyes twinkled with the excitement of undertaking another of many historical journeys he has charted in 40 years as a Christian educator, author, pastor, denominational leader and historian.

Crispus, had he been a real person, probably wouldn't have celebrated the birth date of Jesus Christ, Carleton said. In all probability, December 25 wasn't the date Jesus was born, the professor said.

He continued, "Christians then had an aversion to celebrating either the birth of Jesus or joining in the existing pagan traditions and rituals surrounding the December 25 celebration of the 'time when the sun began to conquer the darkness'."

Carleton said various religions and cultures selected December 25 as a festival day when they noticed the days getting shorter and the nights longer.

"They began to imagine that the sun was being defeated and, doubtless, began to fear that there might event-



Christmas In The History Books

William A. Carleton, dean and professor of church history, emeritus, of Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., is shown against the background of a tapestry of the Magi that hangs in his office. The tapestry was a gift from his son who brought it back from Saudi Arabia. — BP Photo by James Lee Young.

ually be no sunrise.

"Then, between December 22-25, people began to see that the sun was holding its own in the battle against darkness and recognized those days as the 'time when the sun had begun to win its fight,'" Carleton said.

"That's the reason December 25 was celebrated among the Druids of England, the Teutonic tribes in Germany and the pagans of what are now the Scandinavian countries."

Carleton said early Christians thought it would dishonor Jesus to celebrate His birthday. He cited a statement by Origen, a great Christian leader in Alexandria, Egypt, in the year 245 A.D., who said it was "graceful to think of celebrating Jesus' birthday as if He were a pharaoh or king."

"It would have been the same as saying to the early Christians that Jesus had just come into existence, rather than having existed from the beginning of time," Carleton said.

"God was thought of as an eternal

being, so it's a little odd that with this opposition from even Christian leaders in the early days Christmas has still become the most popular Christian holiday," said Carleton.

It was a day that didn't really come to be observed until the latter part of the fourth century, he noted.

December 25 is just one of several days men have chosen through the centuries to celebrate Jesus' birth date. For hundreds of years, there was no agreement as to the correct day of Jesus' birth. Differences on the issue still exist today, said Carleton. Early writers mentioned January 6, March 25, April 18, May 20 and November 17, he said.

Pagan traditions, such as Christmas trees, mistletoe and the exchanging of presents, were adapted into the Christian observance which evolved into the most popular holiday of modern times.

Centuries after the birth of Jesus, when the Puritans gained power in England, it was against the law to

observe Christmas. The day was deemed a "heathen practice" or a concession to the Roman papacy, to which the Puritans were opposed, Carleton said.

"The Puritans said Christ wouldn't have approved of celebrating such a day and ordered everyone to work, as on other days." Shops remained open on Christmas Day, and no one was allowed to light candles, or eat holiday cakes, he continued.

In many towns in England, town criers proclaimed government edicts, shouting, "No Christmas, No Christmas."

Christmas was finally restored as a holiday in England when the Puritans lost their power and the Church of England was restored.

Even the early Americans were slow to accept Christmas, Carleton said.

"It's surprising to find that the famous pilgrims of the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock fame were very much against observing Christmas. On their first Christmas in the New World, they said there wasn't going to be any of this celebration of merriment. Instead, they began to construct the first house 'for common use to receive them and their goods' on December 25."

In spite of opposition from some early American Christians, there were denominations that didn't share the negative feelings about celebrating the birthday of Jesus, Carleton said.

James H. Barnett in his book, The American Christmas: A Study in National Culture, quoted the New York Daily Times of Dec. 26, 1855: "The churches of the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists were not open on December 25. . . but Episcopalians, Catholic and German churches were all open. Inside they were decked with evergreens."

Most states had accepted the day as a legal holiday by the mid-1800s, Carleton added.

Few people today — particularly few Christian groups — oppose Christmas as a celebration, except where the concept of Jesus having come to earth as God conflicts with other religious ideas, Carleton said. Some Christians still see the celebration as pagan, he said.

The power of Jesus Christ to transform the ugly and sordid into something lovely was demonstrated in the transformation of the season into the Christmas celebration, he continued.

Finally, although commercialism too often demoralizes Christmas, the celebration emphasizes peace, benevolence and generosity, Carleton said. "People give presents at Christmas who are normally so stingy they wouldn't give at any other time of the year."

"I think it's a response to the message of Christmas, that God gave His all in His son, Jesus Christ."



Youth Convention

Maranatha To Sing At Coffee House

The Maranatha from Hattiesburg will open the Coffee House for the December 27-28 state Youth Convention, with entertainment and testimony. The group consists of fourteen young musicians who have completely surrendered their lives to the Lord's work. They have given concerts extensively, in Mississippi and in six other southern states. The Coffee House to be held at First Church, Jackson, will begin at 10 p.m. after the Thursday evening session of the convention.



Superintendents Of Missions Meet

Associational superintendents of missions from every section of the state held a fellowship and orientation meeting at Camp Garaywa Dec. 12-14 under sponsorship of the Cooperative Missions Department, Dr. Foy Rogers, director. Several phases of Baptist work were presented and discussed.



Ann Thomason

Rev. and Mrs. Jerry Hubbard

BWA Cites Need For World-Wide Relief

(Continued From Page 1)

distribution of relief there," Tiller said, "although their mission stations are less affected than the more hard hit areas."

The BWA reports that the war in

Southeast Asia has "left millions of orphans, many widows and one of history's greatest number of homeless people."

"Relief in Southeast Asia cannot wait for political stability," Tiller said, "for waiting would mean many more needless deaths from hunger and disease."

Tiller said the Southern Baptist Mission in South Vietnam "is assisting the BWA by administering work for refugee resettlement, economic

rehabilitation for the war handicapped and a halfway house and foster home service for children."

The Baptist World Alliance, he said, also cooperates with the Quakers in other relief work in Southeast Asia.

Appeals from India also "pour into the Washington office of the BWA with great regularity" for assistance to flood and drought victims.

"There are more Baptists in India than in any other country except the United States, but they are for the most part at the lowest economic levels and need outside help when an emergency occurs," Tiller said.

Tiller said a small sum has been sent to aid earthquake and flood victims in Mexico but that more is needed to help reconstruct damaged church property.

Money given through the Baptist World Alliance for a particular area is transmitted entirely for use there, without any diversion to finance administrative or fund-raising costs, Tiller said.

FMB Appoints . . .

(Continued From Page 1)

as a special Day of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East.

Appointed as missionaries were Mr. and Mrs. Ned L. Duncan of North Carolina and Tennessee, to Uruguay; Mr. and Mrs. Jerry A. Hubbard of Missouri and Texas, to Zambia; Mr. and Mrs. Ron W. Hunt of California and Oklahoma, to Liberia; and Miss Ann Thomason of Louisiana, to Taiwan.

Employed as missionary associates were Mr. and Mrs. Horace F. Burns of Oklahoma and Missouri, to Rhodesia; Miss Dorothy (Dot) Elliott of North Carolina, to Japan; and Mrs. Larry Pendley of Kentucky, to Yemen.

Special Notice

There will be no issue of the Baptist Record next week. Following our custom of many years, we omit an issue in the week between Christmas and New Years.

The next issue of the Record will be dated Jan. 3. Because our usual press day falls on Tuesday, January 1, printing will be delayed one day, so your issue of January 3, will arrive one day late.

Mississippians To Serve In Overseas Posts

(Continued From Page 1)

Ark.; and South Leon Baptist Church, Comanche, Tex.

Mrs. Hubbard, the former Dorothy Smart, is a native of Fort Worth. She has attended Ouachita Baptist University, Texas Wesleyan College, Fort Worth, and Southwestern seminary.

She has worked as a secretary in two Fort Worth churches and as a library assistant at Southwestern seminary.

They have two children, Jason Andrew, born in 1970, and Shelah Ruth, 1973.

Miss Thomason expects to be assigned to Taiwan where she will work with students.

Miss Thomason is currently director of the Baptist Young Women and Mission Friends organizations for the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Alexandria.

A native of New Orleans, La., she attended summer school at Tulane University, New Orleans, and Blue Mountain (Miss.) College. She was graduated from Houston (Tex.) Baptist College with the bachelor of arts degree in elementary education and

from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with the master of religious education degree.

During summers as a student, she served as a summer missionary in the Central Valley Association in California, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board; on the summer faculty of Ridgecrest (N. C.) Baptist Conference Center; and as program director for a camp in Charlottesville, Va., sponsored by the Virginia WMU.

She has also worked as youth director at Corinth Baptist Church, Nicholson, Miss., and education secretary at Gentilly Baptist Church, New Orleans.

Christmas In Every Country



Christmas In Africa

Painting by Emmanuel Nsima of Zambia, who was born on Christmas Day.



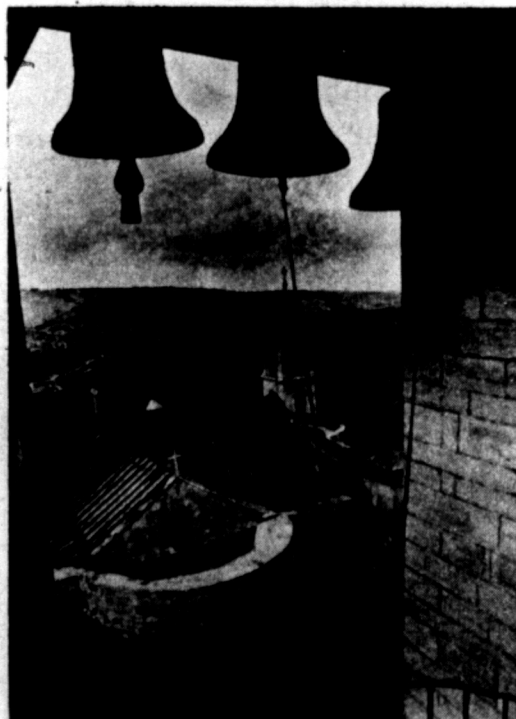
Christmas In Sweden

Sheaves of wheat are placed in trees to feed the birds.



Christmas In Rome

Shoppers stroll on the Via Frattina beneath Christmas lights.



Christmas In Bethlehem

Bells ring at a church in Bethlehem today. (RNS Photos)

The Convention President Speaks

It has been sometime since I have made any effort to mention the Gulf-shore Restoration Campaign in this column; however, that does not mean it isn't close to my heart. You probably have noticed in other news releases that I have been giving some time to this effort.

The thing that really needs emphasizing is to please return your pledge cards to P. O. Box 530, Jackson. It is my opinion that a number of churches have agreed to give two percent of their budget for the next three years, but we have no record of it. I want to stress that this IS important. We must know what the pledging is before anything else can be done. If your church has agreed on this, don't take for granted that we know. Please notify Mr. Nelson's office immediately.

Then I want to urge other churches who have not voted to participate, as of yet, to give prayerful and serious consideration to the cause. Remember, it is your assembly that will be provided. It is your young people's lives that will be touched. It is your leadership that will be trained. It is your and our hearts that will be warmed and challenged. This is not the program of the Baptist Building. It is not my program. It is God's program and we are His children. Let's finish this campaign and get going with Kingdom work. — David Grant.

Mt. Nebo Burns

Mt. Nebo Church, Newton County, burned December 8. The cause of fire was undetermined. Piano, organ, and pews were saved. The members plan to start rebuilding right away.

The congregation had just begun building a pastorage, but it will have to wait now until the church building is replaced. Rev. David Sellers is the pastor.

USSR Baptists Send Christmas Message

MASSY, France (BP) — In a special Christmas and New Year's greeting to Christians around the world, Baptists in the USSR have called on "all those who follow Jesus Christ" to reinforce their prayers for reconciliation in 1974 and "to extend cooperation with all people on earth in the cause of strengthening confidence and friendship among nations."

The message from the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR, according to a report by the European Baptist Press Service here, opens with "sincere greetings with words of love and peace on this great festival of the birth of Christ."

The communication offers thanks to God for the past year, EBPS reports, "when His mercy and covenant of peace have been so visibly revealed in the life of nations — the end of the war in Vietnam, the relaxation of international tensions and the warmth in relations between East and West... (and) the deep interest of ordinary people all over the world in establishing a just and durable peace on earth."

Citing the theme of the July, 1975, Baptist World Alliance Congress in Stockholm — "New Men for a New World Through Christ" — the message says, "Let us unite our efforts in creation of new men for a new world through Christ as fellow laborers for God."

The message said that in the world of rapid changes, the world of tribulations and suffering, the words in Isaiah 54:10 are important and consolatory for all Christians in 1974: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

Cooper Advocates . . .

(Continued From Page 1)

boost for 'Mammon' at the expense of God," Cooper said.

He indicated that most people work only five days, and the sixth day could be used for shopping and personal business. He called on all people who recognize Saturday or Sunday or any other day as the "Lord's Day" to voluntarily help preserve that day's religious significance for them.

Cooper said he advocates that the six-day business week be brought about as a result of personal religious commitment rather than depending on legislative action.

"If the Christians in this country were to commit themselves to the protection of the Lord's Day, they not only would conserve enormous amounts of energy, but they would also make unprofitable the operation of many business establishments on the Lord's Day," Cooper said.

Cooper continued, "If the efforts of over 34,000 Southern Baptist churches and a large segment of the more than 12 million members were directed toward energy-conserving measures for the Lord's Day, not only would a substantial contribution be made toward the needed energy conservation program, but a significant contribution might be made toward generating spiritual energy."

Heartwarming Yuletide Story--A Mountain Widow's Christmas Gift

Editor's Note: This story appeared in a tract published by the SBC Executive Committee around 50 years ago. It was printed by permission in the Baptist Record of December 21, 1960, and is reprinted here.

By Ora L. Jones

On a cold, rainy day in December, 1919, during the last days of the drive to secure pledges in the 75 Million Campaign, I sat in the comfortable office of a young attorney friend of mine in the city of Asheville, N. C. This attorney, a former member of the popular First Church, in order to be of more service to his Master, had several months previously moved his membership to a smaller and less influential church located in the mill district in the west end of the city. Here he had been placed in charge of the 75 Million Campaign for his church.

While we were discussing the probabilities of the West End Church pledging its quota, a woman, probably sixty years old, entered the office. She was very poorly clad, her shoes were worn and broken through in many places; her dress was patched, and her entire costume was rendered more pitiable by reason of the fact that she was wet to the skin. Her only protection from the cold rain was a small shawl, known to a previous generation as a "fascinator." Placing a comfortable chair near a radiator, the attorney led his visitor to it as he introduced her to me as one of the most faithful members of the West End Church. As her teeth chattered from the cold, the woman said:

"La, now, young man, you mustn't believe him. He's always sayin' somethin' to make me feel good when he knows I'm so poor I can't hardly do nothin' for the church."

As the poor old soul sat warming I studied her features. Her face, her hands, her costume spoke eloquently of a lifetime of struggle for the barest necessities. Her eyes told better than words that she had met life's rebuffs unafraid and had come through them all with the dress burned away and the gold in her nature refined. Poor, wet and bedraggled as she was, there was something in her manner that indicated true nobility. Instinctively one could recognize in her a person who knew Jesus — a woman who would be welcomed at the bedside of a dying saint or sinner — one who could weep with those who weep or laugh with those who laugh.

In an undertone my friend told me something of her history. Being left a widow without funds a few years previously, she had gone to make her home with an only daughter, whose husband was killed in a railroad accident shortly afterwards. Soon after this disaster the younger woman's health failed, probably because of hard work and undernourishment, leaving the grandmother with a semi-invalid daughter and four small children provided for.

"How in the world they have managed to live is more than I can understand," my friend continued. "She says she just trusts the Lord for her daily needs and that he has always supplied them. Hers is the greatest faith I have ever seen."

Having warmed and partially dried herself, the old lady explained the reason for her call.

"I heard the Campaign is nearly done and that West End Church ain't a-goin' to git her share," she said. "Now that's too bad, ain't it? I'm afraid to make any pledge, I'm so poor, but the Lord has done so much for me I want to show my gratitude some way. This thirty cents is all the money I've got in this world, so I brought that to you today. The devil tried to make me ashamed to offer it, it's so little; but I told my daughter I was going to bring it and maybe the Lord would find a way somehow, so's it would help. My daughter tried to keep me from comin' and said that the money ought to be saved to get the children some Christmas tricks and that the rain would be bad for my rheumatism. I told her that God would provide for the children and that he wouldn't let rheumatism bother me when I was tryin' to serve him."

"But even after I got ready to come the

devil tried to keep me from it. When I went to hitch the old mare I found she had hurt her foot so bad she couldn't hardly walk. But I said, 'No, I'm a-goin'.' So I walked and here I am."

"You don't mean to say you walked in the rain all the way from your home here, do you?" exclaimed the attorney. "Why, it's eleven miles to where you live."

"Yes, I did," the woman replied. "I wanted to help in the Campaign by bringin' the little I had. I wish I had more to give; but that's all I've got."

"Your offering makes me ashamed of myself and of the members of West End Church," the attorney declared as his voice broke. "That thirty cents will put us 'over the top' unless I am greatly mistaken. When the folks hear about it some of them will do as I am going to do — double their pledge."

As I tried vainly to hide my tears and swallow the lump in my throat I became sincerely ashamed of the pledge I had made to the 75 Million Campaign. I wondered what the Lord had thought of it as compared to the thirty cents brought by this woman — a poor widow's all — or in the light of the sacrifice made by his Son on Calvary. I slipped out of the office feeling small enough to almost crawl thru the keyhole. I hunted up the First Church's Campaign manager and explained to him that the total amount of my five-year pledge was intended only as one's year's quota. I also told him that conditions in my office had so improved as to make it possible for me to find time to help him in the final round-up. The seemingly good excuse I had given a few days previously to evade this work appeared to lose weight when I thought of the widow and her thirty cents.

As a stimulus to the campaign I wrote an article for the newspaper I was then serving as managing editor, telling of the poor old woman talking through the rain, eleven miles and return, to contribute thirty cents — all that she had — to the campaign. The effect on the local 75 Million drive was electrical. Pledges were increased ten-fold in some instances. Every church in the city raised its quota, and in a few instances almost doubled the amount asked.

The story of the widow's sacrifice was republished in dozens and dozens of newspapers — both religious and secular. It was retold by campaign workers all over North Carolina and in other states. One denominational leader declared it was the largest single contribution, in point of results, recorded in the campaign.

Being rich in what the newspaper fraternity denominates "H. I." (human interest), I rewrote the story and submitted it to a syndicate service that served about five hundred daily newspapers scattered throughout the several states of the Union. With the story I submitted photographs of the woman, her daughter and grandchildren and of her home, a two room log cabin with a "lean-to" with cracks between the logs, where the mud daubing was missing, wide enough to throw a dog through, provided the dog was not more than a day or two old.

I was in doubt as to whether the story would be accepted by the syndicate, and I did not expect remuneration of more than a few dollars in case it was accepted. Imagine my surprise when I received a check that amounted to more than my increased pledge for five years! Accompanying the check was a letter from the editor-in-chief stating that my story was "the best that has ever passed over his desk."

The syndicated story, illustrated with the photographs, was sent to each of the five hundred clients of the organization and was printed by practically every one of them. Accompanying the story was a suggestion from the syndicate's editor that those who read it should share of the abundance of their Christmas cheer with the poor family that had given all for Christ's cause. The story was released for publication about one week before Christmas. I was asked by the syndicate to visit the widow's home on or about January 1 to see if

anyone had responded to the editor's suggestion and write a "follow-up" story. January 1 being a half holiday, with only one edition of the paper, I visited the widow's mountain cabin eleven miles from the city.

The interior of that cabin was like a great department store after a frenzied bargain sale. Both rooms and the 'lean-to' were filled with articles of every description. There were dresses, suits, hats, shoes, underclothes, coats and overcoats for every member of the family — many changes for each — made of every conceivable kind of material from worn-out and made over garments to the latest and most expensive Parisian creations, including party dresses. There were books enough to start a small library. There were more toys than any member of the family had ever seen before and candy enough to keep the children sick for the rest of the year. There were contributions of groceries ranging from a package of tapioca to several bags of flour; from a salt mackerel to a side of bacon.

A little crippled girl had nothing she prized more highly than her pet kitten so she sent it "to the little girl who has no papa and whose grandmother gave all her money to God."

Several hundred dollars in cash were received in amounts ranging from ten cents to twenty dollars. A number of prosperous business men wrote to instruct the grandmother to draw on them for any amount she needed. There were more than twenty requests from childless couples for permission to adopt one or more of the children. All of these were denied. There were hundreds of Christmas cards and letters bearing postmarks from every state in the Union.

I found the old lady in the midst of a great pile of miscellaneous articles. Her daughter was reading to her some of the cards and letters. Many of these were from those who had nothing to send but sympathy. As one of these was read the old lady said:

"Poor soul, I'm so sorry for her. I've got so much and she's got so little. I'm going to send her a box full of these things."

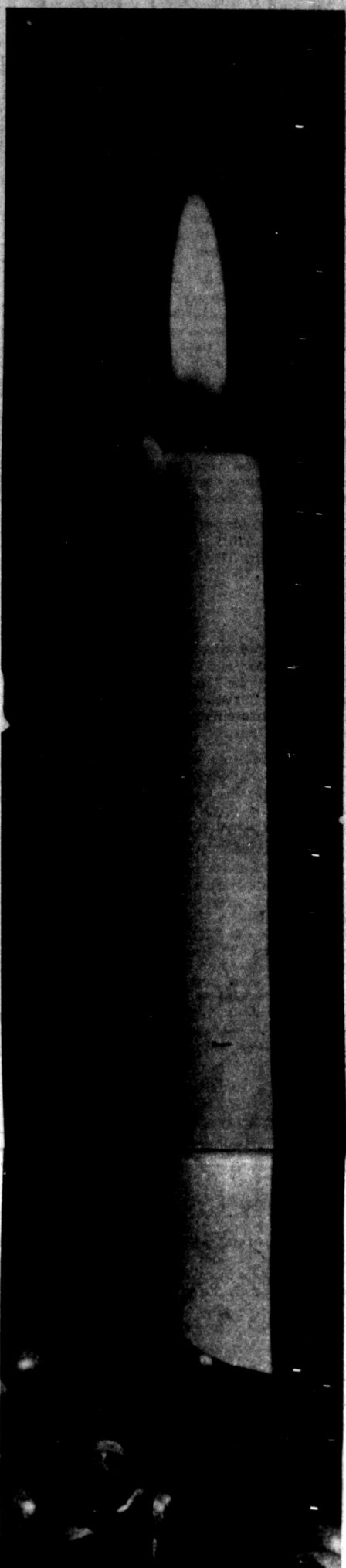
It soon dawned on me that the old lady was giving God credit for a miracle because of the unprecedented shower of good things. She knew nothing of the syndicated story or of the editor's suggestion that she and her family be remembered by those in more prosperous circumstances. There was nothing to excite comment in the fact that he used the rural mail carrier to deliver the answer to the prayer. With Christmas approaching and with nothing in sight to give her grandchildren and with the reproaches of her daughter for giving away their few pennies ringing in her ears, she had calmly carried the matter to God in prayer and had confidently awaited the answer — never doubting that he would grant her request in due time. Her only surprise was that God had apparently overestimated her needs.

"The Lord has been so good to me I just thought I shorely couldn't stand it," she said to me. "I knowed that the children would be awfully disappointed if we didn't get them some Christmas tricks and so I just asked the Lord to send us a few things for them. When the mail carrier commenced to bring packages here I just knowed my prayer was answered. I have just been praisin' him all week. I never was so happy in all my life."

When it was suggested that the great shower of presents was returned from her thirty-cent gift to the 75 Million Campaign, she said:

"No; it ain't that. The Lord knows I never meant to make no show of that. That thirty cents was all I had. I wanted to do something for the poor heathen who don't have no gospel. So I took it in. There's some things the good Lord keeps us in darkness about, I reckon, and how all these presents come to be sent here is one of them. But how do you reckon all these folks got my name and address?"

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."



I AM THE LIGHT of the world. . . Let your light so shine. . . It is more blessed to give than to receive (John 8:12; Matt. 5:16; Acts 20:35)

Christmas In Every Clime

Throughout the night all frosty white
The snow lies on the sleeping fields,
While high and far one silver star
To earth its shining beauty yields.

In mansion tall and cabin small
Both rich and poor have shelter found,
Till far and near, or faint or clear,
The sweet-toned bells of Christmas sound.

"Now praise his name," the bells proclaim,
"For there is born, oh happy word,
An infant small in humble stall,
A Saviour which is Christ the Lord!"

On southern strand or northern land,
Wherever men would worship him,
There Christ is born this Christmas morn,
And in our hearts is Bethlehem.

—A. M. Quick



Christmas In The Mountains



Christmas In The Desert



Christmas In The Shepherds' Fields

—(RNS Photo)

The Baptist Record

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

EDITORIAL

"Everywhere, Everywhere Christmas Tonight!"

As we began to plan this Christmas issue of the Record the words of Phillips Brooks' poem, "Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!" was in our thoughts. When you read the paper you will find that many things in it relate directly or indirectly to the message of that poem.

However, the question kept pressing itself, "What is there in the world today that makes that message meaningful at all?"

There is so much right now which seems to run counter to everything in the Christmas message. One crisis after another seems to be shouting at us, and the din is so loud that it is difficult to hear the bells of Christmas.

Listen to the clamor:

—Discord in Washington that threatens national unity, and breeds distrust of all government;

—The energy crisis which is creating calamity across the land, with interrupted travel, stalled business advance, industrial chaos, a depressed market, and a frightened nation.

—The Arab - Israel conflict, with its international entanglements and threats to world peace;

—The blackmail tactics of oil-producing sheiks, threatening to bring great nations to their knees;

—Vain attempts to find peace in Southeast Asia;

—Disunity among world powers, while leaders desperately strive to solve problems of international relationships;

—Spiraling inflation, with its increasing difficulty in supplying even the necessities of life;

—The famine which exists in many areas of the world, and even now threatens others.

We could go on, for the list seems almost endless.

How could one find joy, or peace, or hope, when there is so much darkness in the world? Where is there any encouraging sign?

Then we hear the words, "Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-

night!" and remember what that first Christmas was.

The world was in darkness in that day too. But light, glorious light, came at that Christmas time.

Long before, the mighty prophet Isaiah had been given a foreview of it. He wrote, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. . . for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. . ." (Isa. 9:2,6).

In Matthew 4:14-16 we find that the coming of Christ in that first Christmas which the world ever knew, was a fulfillment of that prophecy which God had given his spokesman so long before. The world was in darkness, but light came. That light was his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This coming of Christ did not solve all of the world's problems, nor did it remove all of man's miseries, but it did give a revelation of things which transcended all of the earthly problems and human needs.

As Christmas comes to us once again, in this year 1973, it still does just that.

Again the world seems to be walking in darkness. Every news report brings tidings of more shortages, new crises, and a seemingly endless stream of new problems. Peace seems far away, and the solution to man's dilemma appears to be beyond reach. What can Christmas offer in a world like that?

Christmas still brings the message which the world needs most! Man's greatest need is not for shelter, food, warmth or peace, as important as those things are. His greatest needs are spiritual. As those spiritual needs are met, some of the other problems will be solved. Nevertheless, God has not promised solution to all human problems, nor has he said that this civilization must be saved. His promises reach beyond human limitations, to the things which are eternal.

Christmas brought the message of love, the love of God for man, and the love of God shed abroad in man. As that love touches men's lives, it does

bring solution to many of the problems confronting man, but that is not its ultimate purpose.

Christmas brought life, eternal life, that knows not the limitations of human frailty. However, it is life which changes our natures even here on earth, and helps us in solution of earthly problems.

Christmas brought hope, hope that sees the glorious eternal light, that drives away the darkness, because it shines beyond it.

Christmas brought joy, a joy that does not depend upon the satisfaction of human need.

Christmas brought salvation, the greatest possession which any human being can have.

Christmas brought assurance, that the eye of the eternal God is upon his creature, and that the hand of God still directs the lines of man's destiny.

Christmas brought the glad news that God had provided the everlasting answer to man's real needs, and that through the gift of Christmas, man can rise above all of earth's limitations, and be assured of possessing the limitless fullness of God.

Christmas long ago, brought all of this, and more, and as it returns in 1973, it reminds us of all of them once again.

Our lights this year may not be quite as bright, our trips quite as long, or our tables quite as bountiful, and our observance of the season may not be quite as exuberant, but Christmas really means just as much as it ever has.

Christmas is Christ. . . and Christ is the "light shining in the darkness."

"All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of one candle" is an old saying.

Our light of Christmas is not a candle, but a mighty sun, blazing its light across all ages, and into all areas.

Certainly the darkness of this day cannot put out that light!

In 1973, in a world of much darkness, we still must say, "Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!"

Guest Editorial

1973—A Black Christmas?

By Robert J. Hastings, Editor,
Illinois Baptist

In a recent issue, Newsweek magazine raised the question, "Are we running out of everything?"

Some label the shortages as artificial, saying big business is juggling statistics just to raise prices. Others say the shortages are the inevitable result of a mushrooming world population which each year consumes more food, burns more gasoline, and converts more farmland into parking lots.

1973 may be remembered as the "black Christmas." Even before President Nixon banned outdoor decorations, many cities had predicted cutbacks. Bethlehem, Pa., known as "The Christmas City," was thrown into an uproar when Mayor H. G. Payrow announced that yuletide decorations would be cut back by 80 percent.

But if the Christmas of 1973 is brown or even black on the ground, it will be a bright one in the sky.

For hurdlings toward our sun at the incredible speed of 100,000 miles per hour is the Comet Kohoutek, which some predict will be the most dazzling display of this century.

At the end of November, this new comet was visible to the naked eye just before sunrise. By Christmas, with tail billowing out behind for tens of millions of miles, it could glow one-fifth as brightly as the moon. When it reaches

its peak brilliance in January, its tail may sweep across one-sixth of the horizon.

Astronomers predict that after Comet Kohoutek fades from our sight in February, it will not be visible again for 75,000 years!

It seems more than coincidental that for this black Christmas of 1973, God timetabled one of his most striking displays in celestial history.

I know a glowing comet won't put food on our tables, warm our homes, nor fuel our cars. But if this 20th Century star of Bethlehem causes us to look up and beyond the artificial tinsel of Christmas, who can say there's not a silver lining to the energy shortage? "The heavens declare the glory of God," wrote the ancient Psalmist, "and the firmament sheweth his handy-work."

My friend, Bessie Stagg, editor of The Bartonville News at Bartonville, Illinois, recently told me a beautiful story about the Christmas sky.

Tommy, her son, was born with a rare eye malady. He was near-sighted in one eye, far-sighted in the other. Not until he was 8 years of age and in the third grade did his parents learn his eyes were tragically out of focus, each working against the other.

He'd been fooling his teachers by memorizing the reading lessons. When he played softball, he watched the pit-

cher's wind - up, counted five, and started swinging, even though he couldn't see the ball!

Fortunately, a specialist diagnosed Tommy's problem and fitted him with corrective lenses. "If you don't focus properly," the doctor told Bessie, "you can never adjust to the real world."

The first December after Tommy was fitted with his new glasses, Bessie took him to Carson, Pirie and Scott, a large department store in nearby Peoria. When they walked inside, Tommy was overwhelmed with the Christmas decorations.

"He was simply entranced," Bessie told me. "So we just left him standing near the door, drinking it all in, while we continued shopping."

Darkness had fallen by the time they left. Outside, the stars were shining. Little Tommy, really aware of them for the first time in his life, cried, "Look, mother, the Christmas lights are stretched all across the sky!"

Yes, Tommy, that's where the real Christmas lights have been all along. Only too many of us have grown preoccupied with the artificial glitter of earth.

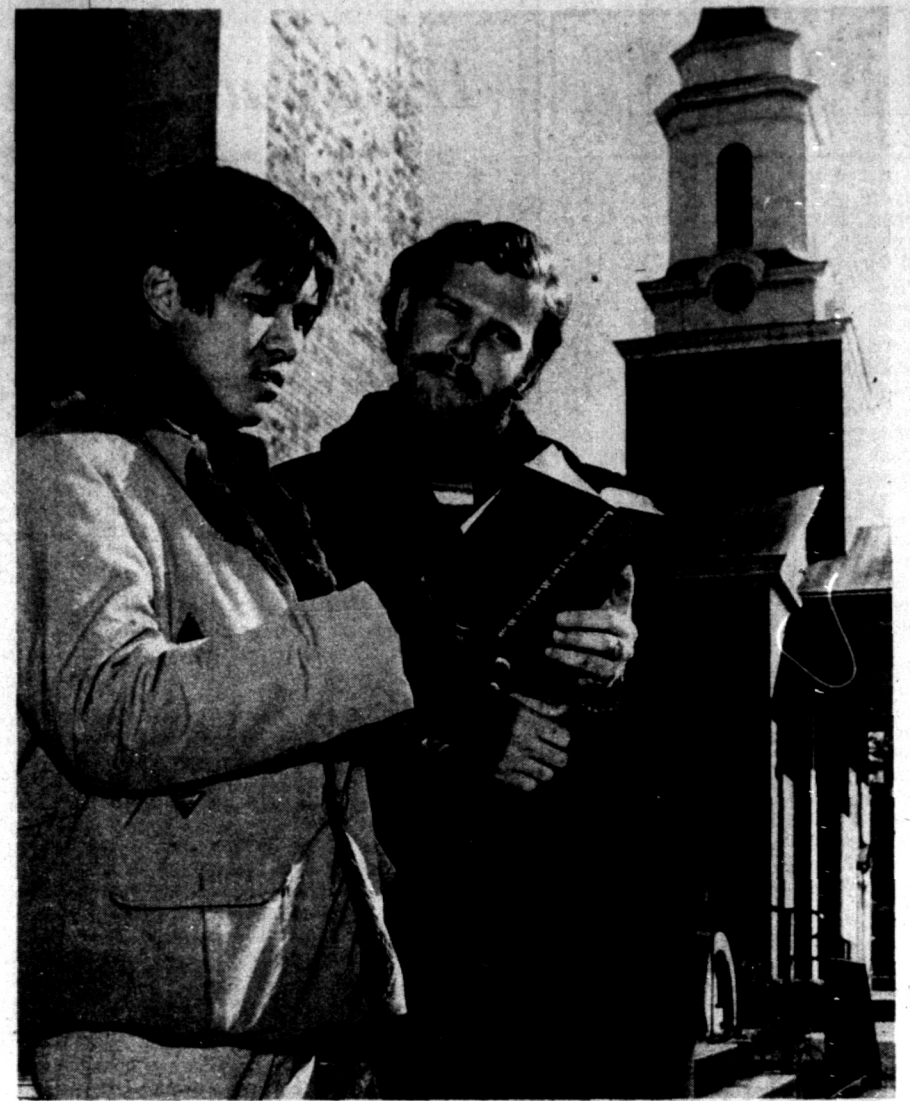
This Christmas, let's all look up! It's the only way to see the Light of the world. And to paraphrase the ophthalmologist, if we can't see what's above us, we can never adjust to what's around us.

WORLD ANYWAY? (Gospel Light, paper, \$3 pp., \$1.25) The young author talks about "the ten most important years of your life (from 15 to 25) and how to make the most of them."

HELL BENT KID by Gordon McLean (Creation House, paper, \$1.25, 158 pp.) A 17-year-old named Art DePeralta, with some friends, pulled off the biggest bank robbery in the history of San Jose, California. Six months later, he stood at court to be sentenced. By then he was a young man who had changed completely, for along the way he had met Jesus.

LET'S GLORIFY GOD by Eric S. Fife (Christian Literature Crusade, paper, \$1.25, 142 pp.) This book presents to college and university students the need for world evangelism, and discusses Biblical principles for world evangelism. In an important chapter, the author deals with various motives for missionary service. He also discusses missions and prayer, missions and money, and missionary qualifications.

HOW TO GROW A CHURCH by Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn (Gospel Light, paper, 177 pp., \$2.95) This book discusses church growth from many angles — the possibilities of growth, the measurement of growth, the characteristics of growth, etc. One of the authors is dean emeritus of the Institute of Church Growth at Fuller Seminary in California.



"Student Day At Christmas"

NASHVILLE—"ENCOUNTERING CHRIST THROUGH HIS WORD" is the theme for Student Day At Christmas, 1973, scheduled for Dec. 30.

THE BAPTIST FORUM

"Christmas Will Never Be The Same Again"

After Trip To Israel

Dear Dr. Odle:

Bethlehem. . . Nazareth. . . the Sea of Galilee. . . Jerusalem. . . Gethsemane. . . the Garden Tomb. . . the Mount of Olives. . . Christmas will never be the same for us again! Why? Because it is one thing to know as a matter of fact of the existence of these places, but it is quite another to be able to experience them personally. Such a privilege and opportunity was afforded my wife, Pat, and me last year only several weeks prior to Christmas Day. This unforgettable and very meaningful trek to Israel came to us as a gift from the very generous people of Calvary Baptist Church, Oak Grove Community, Hattiesburg.

There are several reasons which have motivated me to share this personal experience with the people of our state. First, it is simply another attempt to say "Thanks" to the gracious people among whom we live and work.

Second, it is to say publicly that I thank God for the gracious people among whom we live and work. Satan always makes the most of a situation where a pastor is constantly under attack by a congregation, either justly or unjustly. By the same token, let us seek the best possible results from my testimony to you that during my three years as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, I have found a congregation who has loved her pastor in spite of his mistakes and faults.

And third, it is to express how humbled and, yes, at times even guilty I feel. The generosity of our church is giving Israel to us has given an advantage to my ministry which I long for others to share. I realize that, very early in my ministry, this church provided for me a reality which is still but an unfulfilled dream and desire for many pastors much older and much more worthy than myself. So, you see, Christmas will never be the same to us again!

Nathan L. Barber, Pastor
Calvary Baptist Church
Route 4, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

On The MORAL SCENE...

U. S. ARMED FORCES ABROAD — "Rep. Thomas O'Neill, Mass., charges that 'For more than two decades, the commitment and level of troops abroad has determined our policy rather than our policy determining the level of U. S. forces overseas.' Why is it that 28 years after World War II the U. S. has nearly 600,000 troops overseas, including 319,000 in Western Europe (including 28,000 afloat)? Why are there 42,000 U. S. troops in South Korea and the same number in Thailand? Some 38,000 U. S. forces are stationed in the Ryukus. The U. S. has provided counterinsurgency training to elements of the Ethiopian Army and maintains about 900 military personnel in Ethiopia. Up to 500 Americans are engaged in training Iranian military men in operation and maintenance of the military equipment Iran has purchased from the U.S. Rep. Charles Vanik, Ohio, says that keeping 229,000 young Americans in Germany releases '... young Germans to work in factories making automobiles and other things for the American market. Let us put the cards on the table. Much of this military shield and "tripwire" has been placed in Europe for the protection of American multinational corporations and their massive investments. It is unconscionable that the taxpayers of America should be maintaining a military garrison abroad for the sake of a limited number of giant corporations.'" (From FCNL Washington Newsletter, November 1973).



A Woman's World Reaches Far Beyond the Ironing Board

—Wilda Fancher—

It's December. The carnival ride sits still. Its lights are bright — red, green, blue, yellow, white. They twinkle and blinkle, shooting their spears of light all around at everyone.

The horses on the outside row have strange names gilded on their neck harnesses — Shopping, Partying, Cooking, Eating, Mailing, Visiting.

The callope starts, wheezy piping out "Jingle Bells." The motor grinds the first turn of the ride, and I see the names: Merry-Christmas-Go-Round. I yell, "Hey, wait for me. I want to get on." And I do.

I climb on, walk to a horse, mount it, gather in the reins, lean back and leave my face and hair to the thrill of the wind, the thrill of the Merry-Christmas-Go-Round.

Fast, Faster, and Faster, Fastest. Thrill changes to frustration. Faster. Then I look down at the name of my horse. In tinsel is spelled F-r-e-e-z-y. I look around for a horse with a better name. There is none. "Stop!" I yell. "I want to get off."

Nobody heard me. Nobody even saw me. Slowly I unmounted my steed and, steadying my balance, I walked to the edge of the Merry-Christmas-Go-Round and deliberately jumped off.

What do I do now? I asked myself. I'm all alone out here.

Then I heard a rustle in the shadows away from the lights and music. I walked toward it and came into soft light glow and angel song. Sitting down and listening, I heard sound like the munching a donkey makes eating hay and the soothing a mother makes loving her baby.

I must have come to Bethlehem, I thought. It's Mary talking to baby Jesus while the donkey eats hay and the angels sing Him a lullaby, I added.

But I was wrong, sort of. I moved closer. The munch I heard was a crunching, not donkey's teeth against hay, but of the feet of young children against pavement. The angel song was theirs, and the lightglow came from a porchlight. The talking was a "Thank you, thank you for singing to me."

It was not Bethlehem at all. My head turned back, I could still hear from that far away whirl of light the sound of "Jingle Bells." But I felt as if I had been in the presence of Jesus, and I sang "Joy to the World" the whole December time. —Box 9151, Jackson, MS. 39206.

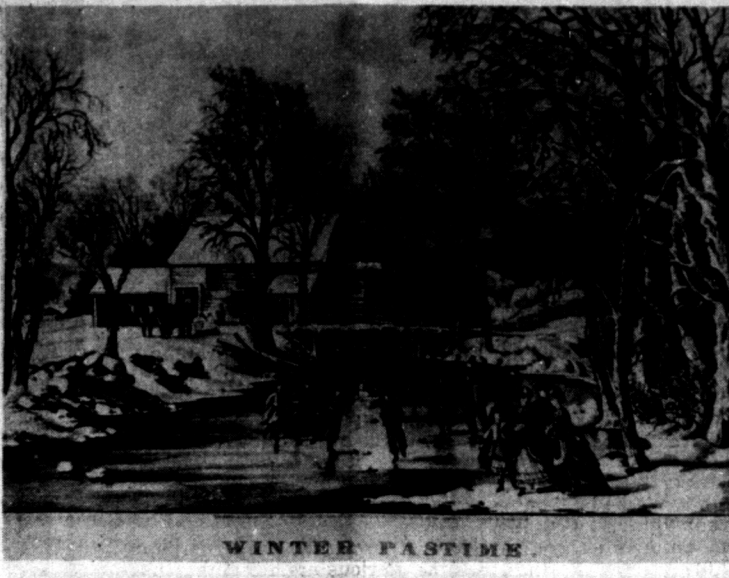
Verse For The Week

When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. —St. Matthew 2:9

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Christmas In Our Memories

(Currier and Ives)

Once Again: The Navajo Christmas Story

"As the cold winter sun dipped behind the crimson contours of Locomotive Butte and Skeleton Mesa, a couple trudged over the sandstone rim and into the bleak expanse of Monument Valley. They were Navajos of The Old Way. Even under the bulk of the Pendleton blanket which she wore over velvet blouse and long skirt, it was obvious that she would soon be a mother. Her husband stayed close to protect her from the wind. Their buckskin moccasin - boots scarcely left tracks in the red sand. "Soon the pungent smell of burning pinon logs let them know that they were approaching a camp. "Perhaps a relative," they thought - for she could walk no further. "Quietly exchanged greetings, a cup

of boiling hot coffee, then their request for lodging. The host motioned about the hogan. They were most welcome at his fire but there was no room for sleeping - too many here already. The nearby summer shade made of cottonwood boughs was the only shelter. "Blankets and sheepskins were hung on the frame of the shade - the only protection from the wind. Husband and wife bedded down. The night grew colder. The mother moaned softly and regularly. "Suddenly the darkness turned to a blaze of light. Descending a rainbow was a youth clad in white decked in silver and turquoise. In his arms was a gleaming white cradleboard to put the baby in. "The mother carefully washed her baby and padded his little body in the soft inner bark of the desert juniper.

He was all plump and brown like all Navajo babies look to this day and from the child the light was spreading. As she looked she failed to see a new and brilliant star casting its glow over the valley. "Miles away other Navajos had seen the light and at first had hidden in fear in their hogans until a voice that came from the sky told them not to be afraid, but to go and see the new child. By morning many had left a small herder to tend the sheep and goats and had started their journey. "Far away beyond the four sacred mountains other tribes saw the light and heard of the miracle. Three chiefs, wise in the ways of their people, started their long journey to visit the Miracle Child. Along the way they inquired of what gifts they might take with them. They were told that

the three most precious things to the Navajos were silver, turquoise and corn pollen. "A little later they squatted before the entrance to the shade. The three gifts were presented to the mother. The light shone brightly around the baby. This was truly the Miracle Child. For 10 years, this Navajo Christmas Story has been featured on the cover of the St. Christopher's Mission Letter in December. The Episcopal Church mission, based in Bluff, Utah, has always preceded the story with this note: "The story of God becoming a man by being born on this earth can be told many ways because He was God and man for all people. Christmas stories are told each year and so once again we give you the Navajo Christmas Story."

Growth Continues In SBC During '73

(Continued From Page 1) bers, a gain of 80,996. However, this figure includes handbell ringers, vocal and instrumental ensemble enrolment which account for approximately three-fourths of the estimated numerical changes. Handbell ringers and ensembles were not included in the 1972 survey. The church music department is "delighted by this growth reported by churches," stated William J. Reynolds, secretary. "This is evidence of the strength of music programs in our churches." Statistics project a 6,228-member gain - or 1.4 percent increase - to 460,500 enrolled in Brotherhood work with Baptist Men and Royal Ambassador boys.

Glendon McCullough, the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's executive director, attributed the increase to a growing interest of laymen in missions and the "team effort of state Brotherhood leaders and Brotherhood Commission trustees" to involve men and boys in missions. "I see the growth of Brotherhood enrolment in the SBC for the last three consecutive years as a prelude to much sharper increases during the next several years as more and more laymen recognize and carry out their individual responsibilities in Christian missions," he added. Enrolment in Training Union, the denomination's Sunday night program of church training, will experience a loss of 98,445 members, according to projections. That's a 4.8 percent decrease to an estimated 1,946,000 enrolment in 1973.

According to Phillip B. Harris, secretary of the board's church training department, new efforts to increase Training Union attendance have begun. "The new promotion project 'CHURCH: the Sunday Night Place' for growth, fellowship and training was implemented this fall throughout the convention," stated Harris. "Church training will be joined by

church administration, church music and church recreation in this project in 1974, and the project will continue through 1979. "Also, 800 growth consultants are just beginning their work on the state level. One or more growth projects in each association will be implemented during the next five years in every state. The summer conferences at the Glorieta (N. M.) and Ridgecrest (N. C.) Baptist Conference Centers will major on enlisting and training members," Harris added. Projections indicate enrolment in WMU, Southern Baptist women's auxiliary, will drop 27,641 for a 2.5 percent loss. Total enrolment for 1973 is expected to be 1,088,000. WMU Executive Secretary Alma Hunt expressed surprise at the projection. Miss Hunt said she had expected no losses because of encouraging reports from field workers and of outstanding response to leader training opportunities. The preliminary projects were arrived at by computing the actual figures from 26,135 churches, then projecting through statistical means the expected reports from the 8,500 remaining churches, Bradley said. "Weighting factors" were added to give "an acceptable degree of accuracy" to these projected figures for planning and decision-making purposes in the denomination, according to Bradley.

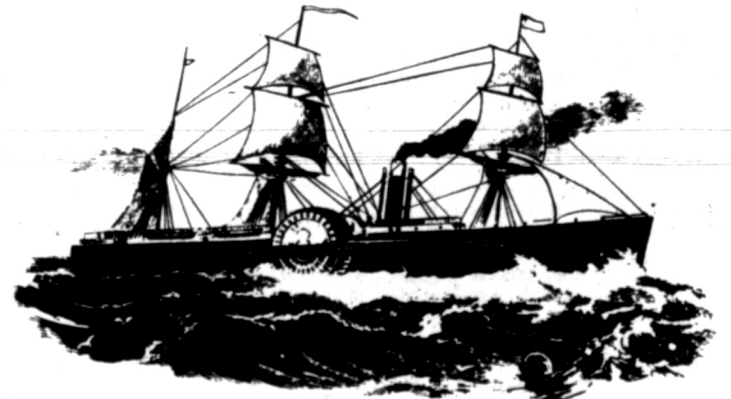
Ford Asked -

(Continued From Page 1)

"Our Constitution's First Amendment has stood the test of time. It has preserved freedom of conscience to a greater extent than any nation in recorded history. "Surely this is not the time to change it. We respectfully urge your serious and searching consideration of these vital issues."

100 years ago this Christmas

A hundred years ago this Christmas, Lottie Moon arrived by ship in China. During this centennial year of the beginning of her ministry, Southern Baptists are challenged by a goal of \$20,000,000 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.



Christmas On The Mission Fields

will deteriorate and the secularism which is known in the western countries will sweep the area. Great rapid changes within society will shake people loose from the values of the past. Many will find their values only in their own pleasures. Extremes of self-indulgence will probably rival that of the Roman Empire. Leaders in Christianity and Islam will be in despair, seeking answers to the falling away from faith in God. The Greek Orthodox bishop quoted above thinks the church of the East must be indigenous. The older churches are looking for something different which will be up to date, eastern, and yet to some extent traditional. The separatist attitude of the older churches is giving way to the desire

to find answers for the extreme problems in the modern world. "The Middle East will change greatly in the next 30 years," says Barnes. "We must be ready to present Jesus Christ to the people." From these and other predictions he lists a number of observations and suggestions of interest to Christians and the Christian mission. Among them are the following: -The movement of people will allow Christian witnessing throughout the area. -Urbanization, with the general breakdown of community control, will give the people more freedom to become Christians. -Secularism will lessen the bonds (Continued on page 6)

Christians Must Cope With Changing Middle East

By Ione Gray

A Greek Orthodox priest in the Middle East has asked a Baptist deacon to help him set up a Sunday School in his church. A Jesuit priest of Cairo says the most important book he has ever read is *The Secular City*, by Harvey Cox. A Greek Orthodox bishop of Beirut says he looks forward to the "church of the future" in the Middle East. Emmett A. Barnes, Southern Baptist missionary to Lebanon, uses these and other illustrations to show that secularism and change have already been felt by the older churches of the Middle East.

Barnes wrote a paper on "Projected Social and Religious Changes in the Middle East" for a Middle East Strategy Conference on missions, held in Nicosia, Cyprus, in March, 1973. "The Arab nations have awakened to find that many of them have the valuable commodity of oil," Barnes wrote. "This one asset will propel the Arab countries into a place of importance and wealth in the world. The importance of this oil in our mobile age and the extent of the wealth is just now being realized by the rest of the world." Barnes' bold statement of early 1973 just may become the understatement of the year. On November 22 the Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ahmed

Zaki al-Yamani threatened in Copenhagen, Denmark, to cut oil production by 80% if the United States, Europe, or Japan took measures to counter current Arab oil boycotts and reductions. The oil minister also threatened to blow up certain Saudi Arabian oil fields if the United States should take any military action. Sheikh Yamani made the statements in reaction to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's remark at a news conference on November 21 that America might have to consider countermeasures if the Arab oil embargo against it continues too long. With oil being used as a weapon in international politics, it is impossible to estimate the oil earnings of the

Middle Eastern countries in the immediate future. However, a quote from a February, 1973, issue of the *Daily Star*, newspaper in Beirut, indicates something of the potential. Robert O. Anderson, chairman of the Atlantic - Richfield Oil Company, estimated "that the Middle Eastern oil producing countries will earn one trillion (one million million) dollars in the next 30 years." "Any projection of the Middle East for the future has to take this wealth into consideration," says Barnes. "In the development of industries some movement of people will take place," he explains. "People with technical skills will be willingly brought in from other countries while movement of the unskilled labor force may simply be a shift from the rural area to the urban centers."

Barnes says another type of development which is certain to take place is the irrigation of the large fertile areas of the Middle East which are not now productive. "With funds and technology these countries could be gardens," he says. A process of urbanization will take place in the countries of the Middle East. Strict community control will be broken down in the cities, and even the villages will be affected. Barnes predicts: "Moral standards



Christmas In The Art Museums
THE NATIVITY, an etching by Adolph Beaufreire (RNS Photo)

Annuity Board "13th Checks" Top \$1 Million

DLLAS (BP) - More than 7,000 annuitants have again received a "Christmas present" of two extra months' benefits, the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board announced here. Darold H. Morgan, board president, said the "13th check" this year totaled a record \$1,187,379. It's the second year in a row it has exceeded a million dollars. The "13th check" went out in early December to disabled and retired pastor and other church-related vocational workers on their widows and on contributions to Annuity Board plans in earlier years.

"Contracts call for fixed monthly benefits, yet the cost of living rises continually," Morgan said. "The '13th check' helps annuitants bridge this gap." Extra benefits were first distributed in 1967. They took the name "13th check" because they paid a sum equal to one month's benefit - above the 12 regular monthly payments. For the last three years, the "13th check" has actually been the "13th and 14th checks," Morgan added. It has equalled two regular monthly benefit payments. Good experience on investments makes possible continued issuance of these checks, the Annuity Board

president explained. The "13th check" is not guaranteed by contract. Funds for it depend year by year on the amount of returns on investments. At the same time, the Annuity Board sent additional payments to nearly 400 persons who receive relief benefits. These payments totaled \$29,775, according to Morgan. "As 1973 ends, all of you know there is an unusual crisis in the investment responsibility. Since the '13th check' is based on the current investment experience, there is a strong possibility that the '13th check' for 1974 will be considerably smaller," Morgan advised annuitants in a personal note accompanying the 1973 checks.

Sunday School Lesson: International

The Son Of God Did Come; The Word Dwelt Among Us

By Clifton J. Allen
John 1:1-5; 14-18

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the touchstone of Christianity. If the Son of God did not become a man on earth, Christianity is a farce. But the fact stands, confirmed beyond any possibility of refutation: The Son of God did come: "the Word became flesh." Therefore, Christianity is a historic, supernatural, and redemptive reality. The New Testament declares the fact again and again. The New Testament is itself the outcome of the incarnation. The Christian church in the world is witness to the fact of

the saving work of Christ on earth. The power of the gospel the countless persons changed by the redemption of Christ, and the assurance in Christian hearts all combine to declare that the glory of God became manifest on earth in Jesus of Nazareth.

The Lesson Explained
THE WORD ALWAYS WAS (vv. 1-5)
The writer of this Gospel identifies Christ as the Word or the Logos. This word had tremendous meaning and significance for both the Jews and Gentiles. For the Hebrew mind it connoted the dynamic or energy of God, really a projection of God's being or

God himself. It was the very expression of his purpose and power, of his reason and wisdom. It stood for God and even acted for God. For the Greek mind the Logos was the power and the reason behind the universe and the explanation of the universe. At whatever point you can conceive of anything ("in the beginning") the Word was in existence. He was related to God in unity and equality. He was the same in nature as God. Therefore he was himself the full expression of God's reason, God's purpose, God's love, and God's power. It follows that he was the agent of

the Godhead in creation. He was the source of life and light.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH (vv. 14-15)

The miracle of the incarnation was God's great act of self-disclosure through his Son. It of course implies or anticipates the entire Christ event, God's saving work in Christ which was inclusive of his death and resurrection. His birth, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, was miracle and mystery beyond human comprehension. The eternal Word became flesh: the Son of God became a man on earth. This was the actual break-

through of the Creator - God into humanity. The eternal Christ took the form of a man and became as truly human as he was truly divine. He was the God - man. Thus God identified with man, showed his love for sinful man, and became the means of man's salvation. The fact that the Word "dwelt among us" emphasizes that he became at home with his people. He was the full and perfect revelation of the grace and truth of God. The writer of the Gospel gives his own witness: "We beheld his glory," which was the glory of his divine nature and sinless life, his self-giving ministry

and self-sacrifice on the cross.
GRACE AND TRUTH CAME THROUGH THE SON (vv. 14-18)

Here we have the reason for the incarnation or the divine intention in the incarnation. In the coming of Christ the fulness of God came down to the human level, and thus the abundant grace of God was offered to mankind. The law was weak and could not be the means of salvation. But grace and truth were not only revealed through Christ, they were made available through Christ. God could not be revealed adequately by the law; he could be seen in the fulness of his glory in the Son. The one who came out from the bosom of the Father, even the Son, revealed God as living Person, forgiving Father, all-sufficient Savior, and everlasting Lord. Through the incarnation God revealed his saving purpose, manifested his infinite love, mediated his abundant grace, and offered life and light to men.

Sunday School Lesson: Life and Work

The Witness Of The Spirit

John 15:26; Matthew 1:18-25
By Bill Duncan

David Niven, the famous actor, recalled that his most memorable Christmas took place on Christmas Eve 1939. He had just arrived in England from Hollywood to volunteer for the British Army. Because of previous military experience he was commissioned and given command of a platoon that was about to be sent to France. Most of the men were not very happy in leaving their homes and jobs to go to a "phony war." Being commanded by a Hollywood actor made the whole thing even more ridiculous.

They were not permitted liberty on that Christmas Eve because they were due to leave England the next day - a fine prospect for the holidays. To make matters worse, the entire platoon was housed in the shabby stables of a farm near Dover.

Mr. Niven could sense the hostility in every soldier. The air was thick with sarcastic cracks about his bravery in various motion pictures.

It so happened that every night of his life he had knelt down by his bed and said a simple prayer. But that night he was faced with a difficult decision. If he suddenly knelt in prayer there in front of those men, it occurred to him that 40 tough soldiers would take it as a final evidence of Hollywood flamboyance. On the other hand, he had always felt it wrong to avoid saying his prayers because the situation was not convenient. Besides, it was the eve of Christ's birth.

Finally he summoned up his courage and knelt by his bunk. As he prayed there was some snickering at first, but it soon died away.

When he finished and lay down on the straw, he looked sheepishly around the stable and saw at least a dozen soldiers kneeling quietly and praying in their own way.

It was not the first time God's Spirit had entered a stable and touched the heart of men.

Jesus said, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

When the story of Jesus is told to

us, when the picture of Jesus is set before us, when the teaching of Jesus is unfolded to us, when the spirit of Jesus is shown to us, what makes us feel the sense of God? That reaction of the human being is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit within us who moves us to respond to Jesus Christ.

The person who will hear the Christmas story and worship will have an experience of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Many will only be impressed with the glitter and ribbons. There will be much talk of the energy crisis. But to those that are open to the Holy Spirit there will be an encounter with Truth and Life.

The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to himself. He always magnifies Jesus Christ. A lot that is called emotions is not the Holy Spirit in our time. Quietly but truthfully the Spirit witnesses of Jesus Christ and his message of hope.

BORN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Matt. 1:18-25

The essence of the Matthew story is that in the birth of Jesus the Spirit of God was operative as never before in this world. The fact is that Jesus was born of a woman who was a virgin, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us lay aside the debatable issues because of the strong evidences of the scripture.

Joseph was convinced by the Holy Spirit that it was right to marry Mary and rear the child that she was to bear. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit had not been developed at the time of the birth of Jesus, but Joseph experienced the full ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Jews connected the Spirit of God with the work of creation as the creator of the world and the giver of life. That power that breathed life into that which was no life, now creates life in the virgin.

According to the Jewish idea, the Holy Spirit was the person who brought God's truth to men. The Spirit taught the prophets what to say and what to do. So it was natural that the Spirit told Joseph what to do about the coming birth of Jesus Christ. So Joseph believed that the Holy Spirit enabled men to recognize that truth when they saw it, as well.

Men are blind by their own ignorance and are led astray by their own



Christmas In Austria

OBERNDORF, Austria—Stained glass windows in a memorial chapel at Oberndorf, Austria, honor the two men responsible for one of the world's best known Christmas carols, "Silent Night." The windows show Father Joseph Mohr, who wrote the text, and Franz Xaver Gruber, who composed the melody. (RNS Photo).

prejudices. Many people have their eyes darkened by sin. But the Holy Spirit can open the eyes of men, standing so that Jesus Christ is revealed.

If the Holy Spirit can open the eyes of Joseph, we need also to be open to the witness of the Holy Spirit to see the real truth of Christmas. The testimony was accepted and truth believed.

EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

How do you explain the difference in Christians? Many have great ability but are ineffective. Others have little talent but are instruments of God.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give them ability even to stand before courts under pressure with words to speak. The example of Peter and John healing the lame man at the Gate Beautiful and then giving their defense is the fulfillment of that promise. This was the witness that men

must bear to Christ.

However, the Holy Spirit is the one who says "This is true and I know it." The Holy Spirit is the one who teaches the witness what to say and then takes those words and uses them for his cause.

Christians today are to be witnesses with personal conviction and outward faith. But this can never be the quality of heart and soul without the Holy Spirit.

At the Christmas season, it is easy to bear witness. But we should pray that we shall be in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and not in our own strength. The Holy Spirit can take a few elements of truth and show us God in a beautiful way.

It is my prayer for you that the Holy Spirit will give a sense of love and hope and use you as an effective witness during this Blessed Season.

Christians Must Cope With Changing Middle East

(Continued from page 5)

of traditional religion. It will break down many of the barriers which pre-

sently separate religious groups. It will so influence young people that few will be willing to accept the tra-

ditional role of the clergy.

—The people of the Middle East are religious by nature and will not

remain in secularism. Christians will have opportunity to witness to their faith.

—The concept of the church will have to change from the present stereotype. Laymen will have great opportunity to present Church. A church community in a church building with a paid pastor will be too cumbersome to move quickly to take advantage of the opportunities. The idea of cell groups under the direction of laymen would be more appropriate. Perhaps these would be extensions of the existing churches. The idea of Christian service must be changed from the energies of people being directed inwardly to the church to energies being directed outwardly to people not in church.

—Christian groups who emphasize the role and importance of the laymen will be more effective than those who make a definite distinction between the laity and the clergy.

—Secularism will change some normal patterns of mission work. Instead of coming to a stable community where he has to completely adjust to the community, the missionary may find himself helping the people adjust to their new situation which will be more like his native element. This different role must not be confused with a paternalistic attitude.

—Baptists and other evangelicals cannot ignore the other Christians of the area. Some of the older churches are in a time of reformation.

—Christians will have to have a fresh and up-to-date theology if they are to meet the challenge of secularism and have a message for other people.

Special Service To Honor J. M. Foy, Retiring 2nd Time!

On December 30 Rev. John Melvin Foy will terminate his services with Park Haven Church, Laurel.

A special service to be conducted on Sunday night, December 30, at Park Haven, will begin at 8:30 and will be a special tribute to Brother Foy. Dr. Joel Murphy will be in charge of this service and members of the family, members of the congregation, and special friends will participate. All friends are invited to attend.

This has been his third pastorate in Laurel. In 1944 he assumed the pastorate of South Laurel Church. Much of his work there was done on week-ends, for he and Mrs. Foy were students in New Orleans Seminary. In 1949 Mr. Foy moved to Franklinton, Louisiana where he became pastor of Spring Hill church.

In response to the call of Wildwood, Rev. and Mrs. Foy returned to Laurel in 1952 and for 12½ years led a new and rapidly growing church to heights envisioned only in the mind and heart of God. It was during this ministry that the church entered into three major building programs.

In 1964, when Mr. Foy reached the age of 65, he sought to retire and did

resign the pastorate of Wildwood, but it was then that a small and struggling congregation sought his services. His answer to Park Haven Church was affirmative and for nine years he has led them to a place of strength and permanence. On a recent Sunday the church received her 400th member under his leadership.

It was during his ministry at Park Haven that he suffered the loss of his wife and he later married Mrs. Win-

nie Smith, the widow of the late Rev. G. W. Smith.

Mr. Foy is the father of Rev. Aaron Foy, pastor of Tucker's Crossing Church, and Mrs. Ava Murphy, wife of Dr. Joel Murphy, pastor of Second Avenue Church, Laurel, and also the late Rev. John Foy, Jr.

The Foy's reside at 76 Lindsey Drive Laurel, and following this "second retirement" he will be available for interim and supply work as needed.

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Christmas In Mississippi

The church float from Calvary, Greenwood, won first place in the 38th Winter Carnival and Christmas Parade in Greenwood. It was the only float using a Christ-centered theme. The Float Committee of the church, including a number of the men and young people, completed and entered the float on the theme, "He Keeps Me Singing—Keep Christ in Christmas." Major Clay Ewing asked permission to have the float represent Greenwood in the parade at Durant on December 4. Rev. Rayford Duck is the Calvary pastor.

Names In The News



Calvary Church, Greenville will have a dedication service for Rev. and Mrs. (former Joyce Braswell of Calvary) Jere Wilson on Sunday morning, December 23 at the 11 a.m. service. Rev. and Mrs. Wilson are missionary appointees to Brazil. They enter missionary orientation in January at Pine Mountain, Georgia and depart for Brazil July 1974. They will be honored with a reception at Calvary on Sunday afternoon December 23 from 2-4 p.m. Rev. Howard Taylor is pastor of Calvary.

David Cox of Clinton has been called as director of music and youth for Carmel Church, Monticello. A sophomore at Mississippi College, he is majoring in mathematics and is a member of the Vesper Choir of the college. At Carmel, he is leading the Youth Choir in rehearsals of "Now Hear It Again," Christian folk musical to be presented in the spring. The Carmel Adult Choir is rehearsing the Christmas musical, "Love Transcending."

C. H. "Pop" Stone of East Howard Church, Biloxi, will be song leader for a coming revival at Bay Church, Jonesboro, Arkansas, Rev. Lewis Woods, pastor. Dr. Jimmie Millican of Mid-America Seminary, Little Rock, Ark., will be the evangelist.

Dr. Fuller B. Saunders, pastor of First Church, Houston, Ms., taught the book, Colossians, to the Chickasaw County Baptist Pastors' Conference on November 19. This book was taught to assist the pastors in their preparation for the January Bible Study in their respective churches.

Dr. Wendell Belew visited at length on the campus of Clarke College on Monday, November 12. He is Director of the Division of Missions for the Home Mission Board. The Division of Missions includes among other areas of work, oversight of the Student Summer Mission Program, and Dr. Belew has

expressed a particular interest in the fact that Clarke College has, for the past two years, appeared among the top twenty colleges in the nation in the number of students participating in summer missions.

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Merritt, missionaries to Germany on furlough, may be addressed at P. O. Box 501, Waynesboro, Miss. 39367.



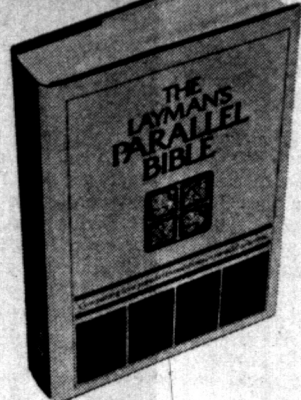
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Our Children Write: Dear Mr. And Mrs. Missionary

By W. N. McElrath
Missionary, Indonesia

In the past eight months, Betty and I have heard from more than eight hundred American boys and girls. Every Southern Baptist missionary expects to receive occasional letters from Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action, and other youngsters. But our notes happen to have been mentioned recently in several periodicals besides the usual birthday prayer calendar. That's why our incoming mail has been so heavy.

Who are these youngsters whose scrawled and block-lettered epistles have been arriving daily in such piles? They are children in your church family—maybe in your own family. They are mostly preadolescents—some even preschoolers who dictated their notes.

The mechanics of writing a

missionary were rather awesome to some of our young friends. We got letters beginning "Dear Mr. and Mrs. William" and "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bandung Indonesia." Some handled that problem by being short and sweet; the following letters are here quoted in their entirety:

Kelli: Thank you
Rhonda Kay: I like you.
Todd: Thank you for being a missionary for us.

The questions they can ask:
Joye Lynn: Are you having fun? Bandung, Indonesia is a long way from Ohio. I live in Ohio.

Lezlie: I want to know how many people have started believing in Jesus?

Kathleen: I am writing to thank you for the work you are doing. What is your work? Thank you again for the work your doing.

Deena: I don't want you to think I'm knowse. But how many children do you have.
What do missionaries do, anyway?

Robin: I bet you meet so many interesting people. I watched the Miss Universe pageant last night, I never realized there was so many different people.

Many of them put their small fingers precisely on the main reason behind all valid missions methods.

Deborah: Thank you for telling God to people.
We all like to be liked.

A main theme in the letters was, "I appreciate — appreciate, appreciate, appreciate, a preckieate — what you are doing." The youngsters' love, praise, and appreciation overwhelmed us sometimes — but what a nice way to be overwhelmed!

Bruce: You are doing what God wants you to, and I like that.

Amy: If it wasn't for you and Saul we might not be saved.

Maria: I have seen two missionaries before. I forgot their names. I know your as good as they are.

Promises of support, words of advice

Lisa: We will be spraying for you every day to teach children.

Kathy: I'll pray for you every week Pray for me to I need it too.

Denise: Thank you so very much for being a missionary in Bandung, Indonesia. Tell the people in Bandung I love and are praying for them. Tell them I said God is great.

Becky: I'm glad your a missionary. It takes courage & faith. You are a lucky person to have

God love you. But he loves every body. But when you feel down remember God won't put more on you than you can take.

Even slips of the pencil that plagued our young correspondents sometimes came out sounding pretty encouraging.

Jenny: May God Bless you as our prayer

Mark: thayou for priching all over the word love

Maria: I've been studing about missionaries. And we've been sending envonlops with money to missionaries as best I can.

Traci: Our church is very conscious minded of foreign missions.

Patricia: I want to tell you about my Mission and special offering box. Every time I get change under a quarter I put it in the box. And every time a special offering comes up I give to it.

Many of these letters clearly suggest why we think these notes were important enough to be read and responded to. About seven percent said something like this:

Ralph: When I grow up I want to be a missionary like you.
Tammie: Some day I might want to be a missionary myself I thank if Jeuse wanted me to be a missionary I would.

Yvette: I have just become a Christian. It isn't easy. I am so glad people like you want to tell about Jesus. You must be very brave. I am going to be a missionary. I think it would be exciting.

Betty and I can't help recalling that we ourselves were once the kind of youngsters who write letters to "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Missionary."

(NOTE: This article is a condensation from an article in January, 1974, Contempo.)

Off The Record

As he paid his hotel bill, the man turned and called to the bellboy, "Run quick up to room 455 and see if I left my pajamas and razor there. Hurry! I have only five minutes to catch the airport bus!" Four minutes later, out of breath, the boy was back. "Yes, sir," he panted, reported to the guest. "They're up there."

Spoofers to Ecology Nut: "What have you been doing lately?" Ecology Nut: "Well, I just shot an arrow into the air and it stuck!"

He eats so much that his wife is giving him a battery-operated fork for Christmas.

At the funeral of a very wealthy man, a stranger joined the funeral procession, and began weeping and wailing louder than all the others. "Are you a relative?" someone asked. "No." "Then why are you crying?" "That's why!"

Clara To Present Christmas Cantata

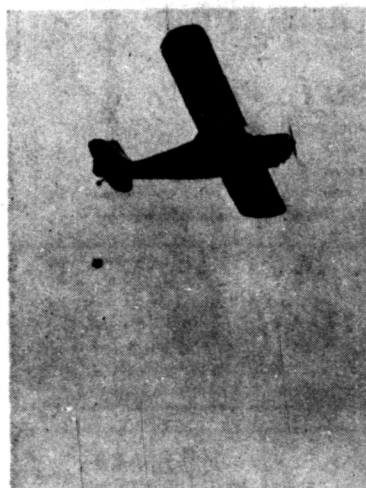
On December 23 at 5:30, the adult choir of First Church, Clara will present its annual program of Christmas music. This year's presentation will be "The Night The Angels Sang," a cantata by John W. Peterson.

The choir is under direction of N. L. Shoemaker, Jr. Melita Ann Shoemaker and Mrs. Orpha Carroll will be the accompanists. Soloists are Mrs. Willie Gale Trigg and Mrs. Elbert James. The narration will be done by Rev. David C. Edenfield, pastor. Performance will be in the church sanctuary. The public is invited.

Youth Celebrations To Be Shortened

NASHVILLE — The national energy crisis has caused Southern Baptist church training leaders to condense the Winter Youth Celebrations at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Centers.

Registrants have been notified that the celebrations for high school youth and leaders are now scheduled to close with a midnight celebration Friday, December 28, rather than ending on Sunday, December 30.



Christmas On The Rio Grande

RIO GRANDE CITY, Texas — No sleigh for Santa in desolate Starr County, Texas. He flies a light plane, dropping Christmas gifts to the isolated families below. Santa is Rev. James Gebhart, Southern Baptist missionary. — RNS-Photo



When their "airborne Santa" makes his rounds, children are excited to find the package of clothes, toys and candy he has dropped. Each year, Mr. Gebhart drops more than 150 Christmas gift packages to ranch families. Presents have been donated by Southern Baptist churches. Inside each parcel is a booklet telling the Christmas story. — RNS Photos by Don Rutledge

A Christmas Prayer

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the Angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the Wise Men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing that Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake." Amen.

Christmas Waves A Magic Wand

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful. If only for one short day, ill will is set aside, and the effect upon our lives is miraculous. What an astonishing contrast Christmas creates in the upsurging of love and kindness in men's hearts! Everyone is happy.

The mental and spiritual health-giving quality of good will refreshes mankind like a tonic. Nothing during the year is so impressively convincing as the vision Christmas brings of what this world would be if love became the daily practice of human beings.

What a world we will have when at last men heed His wise advice to "love one another!"

—Norman Vincent Peale

Devotional

Five Gifts You Need For Christmas

Matthew 2

By Charles Dampier, Pastor, Iuka Church

Some years ago I introduced a sermon with the question, "Do you know what you want for Christmas?" Imagine my amazement when a little four-year-old yelled, "Yea, Preacher! I want a red wagon and a billy goat." Needless to say, he "got my goat." But let me raise the question to you. Do you know what you really need for Christmas?

First, you need the spirit of God who gave. John 3:16 teaches that just as God loved, so he gave. God became small in the form of a babe that we might become humble and childlike by trusting him.

A mother of three carried her children on a picnic. One child was mentally retarded. The two other children picked a banquet of flowers for their mother, but the little retarded girl gave her only a weed. The mother said to her, "Your gift is the best of all because you gave it in love."

Secondly, you need the sweetness of Mary who was the servant of God. Mary was a humble person whom God chose to use. God always uses the "poor in spirit" and those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." She likely was very young. Nevertheless, she was a chosen vessel of God. Baptists have too long pushed Mary into the background of Christian history. While she was not divine, she nevertheless was God's child dedicated to do His will. Yes, a Christian needs a sweet spirit like Mary.

Thirdly, you need the courage of Joseph who could play second best. When you read the story of Joseph, you discover an obedient servant who knew how to play second fiddle and play it well. That takes a real man. In addition, Joseph is portrayed as a trusting soul. He believed in God. He also had faith in the girl he was engaged to marry. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph is one of the lesser characters of the Bible. But he must have been a giant spiritually because it takes a big person to stay in the background. That's what Joseph did.

Fourthly, you need the adoration of the shepherds who were humble. After all, "watching over the flock by night" did not exactly put the shepherds in the upper class of society. But these humble men discovered that "the meek do inherit the earth" because they saw the world's greatest gift—the Christchild. Consequently, the shepherds discovered there is only room for one God because he fills heaven and earth as well as the heart. Strange, isn't it, that God chose such common people for this most important event! But wait, these people were not common, for they were God's people.

Fifthly, you need the wisdom of the wise men who worshipped Jesus. During the Christmas season, it is easy to get busy and not worship the one who is the hero of Christmas and all of history. Like the wise men of old, we need to bow in reverence and respect to our Lord. Just as Jesus Christ was their hope, he is our hope. The hymn writer was right when he wrote, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

Friendship To Present "Love Transcending"

At Friendship Church, Route 1, McComb, the 35-voice Youth Choir presented a cantata of Christmas songs on December 18.

On December 19, all the choirs boarded a bus to sing Christmas Carols over the community. After the caroling a film was shown at the church entitled "In the Spirit of Christmas."

A cantata, "Love Transcending," will be presented by the Adult Choir on December 23 at 7 p.m. The public is invited. Mr. and Mrs. T. M. White will serve as hosts for fellowship after the program.

Clifton Williams is minister of music. Mrs. Ray Taylor, Jr. and Mrs. Luther Toney are accompanists. Rev. H. Glen Schilling is pastor.

A Birthday Present From Mt. Pleasant

"Mt. Pleasant Church has decided to give a special birthday present this year at Christmas," says Nancy D. Wallace, one of the members. "As a present to the community and the public, we are going to present a live manger scene to remind people that the true meaning of Christmas is to celebrate Jesus' birthday."

The program will be given from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on December 23, on the church grounds, south of Bogue Chitto and north of Summit on Highway 51.

The choir will sing Christmas carols. A manger scene will feature live characters. The program will be presented in four thirty-minute parts and should interest both children and adults.



Light Ye Candles

Then be ye glad, good people,
This night of all the year,
And light ye up your candles,
For His star it shineth clear.

—Old English carol

His Gift

He did not use a silvery box,
Or paper green and red;
God laid his Christmas gift to men
Within a manger bed.

No silken cord was used to bind
This gift sent from above;
'Twas wrapped in swaddling clothes
And bound with cords of tender love.

—Anonymous

They Had Their Place To Fill

I would like to have been
The angel that God sent
To tell the virgin Mary of
The most blessed event.
To make this message known
He'd be a special one
To tell the chosen Mary that
She'd bear God's only Son.

I would like to have been
The virgin Mary when
She heard that she would bear
The Saviour of lost men.
To be God's chosen vessel was
The dream of many a maiden's heart.
To bear the Holy Child of God —
Each longed to have a part.

I would like to have been
The innkeeper who said,
"Sorry, there is no room —
Maybe the cattle shed."
And then, on second thought
That God at Bethlehem
Would send His Infant Son,
To have given my home to them!

I would like to have been
The angel on that night
As he to shepherds went
Surrounded in God's light.
The angel who calmed their fears —
"Behold! Good news I bring
Of joy to people all!
This day is born your King!"

I would like to have been
One of the shepherds in the field
The night Jesus was born,
To whom His birth was first revealed —
One of the first to see

SCRAPBOOK



Evergreen Tree

Oh! Evergreen tree, son of the sod,
Brother of man, creation of God.
We were both nothing, 'til he gave us birth.
And granted us life, and placed us on earth.
There you stand on that hill
Between earth and the sky.
Adorning the earth with your branches held high.
Honoring Jesus who came from above
To die for our sins, with mercy and love.
May I tell the same story, to people near me?
Just two chosen vessels, so all here may see.
A mere mortal on earth, and a lovely Christmas tree.
—Mrs. Charles L. Dye

The Only Hope

"O God, . . . because you answer prayer, all mankind will come to you with their requests. You are the only hope. . . throughout the world and far away upon the seas" (Psalm 65:1, 2, 5, The Living Bible).

First Christmas

Great star
With silvered light
Brightened that winter night,
Moved across blue-black skies—silent
Herald.

Shepherds
Looked, feared, followed
The sign—worshipped Baby Jesus
Who slept sweetly on hay—haloed
Christ Child.

Wise men
Came from the East,
Brought frankincense, myrrh, gold
Offerings for the new-born son,
Earth's King!

Angel choirs
Sang of "Peace"
While Mary hushed her babe,
God's supreme gift to redeem man,
S-A-V-I-O-U-R!
—Eunice Barnes



Christmas In Switzerland

This joyful William Medcalf painting depicting Christmas in Switzerland is one of the many full-color illustrations in Christmas, An American Annual of Christmas Literature and Art.